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Jill Rodrigues
Roger Williams University

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Fulbright Scholar Anthony Salazar '15 to Teach in Germany

German and international relations graduate earns Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Scholarship to work with schoolchildren in Germany



May 15, 2015 | Jill Rodrigues '05

BRISTOL, R.I. – With his eyes on the prize of a Fulbright award at the culmination of his undergraduate career at Roger Williams University, Anthony Salazar '15 learned just six days before Commencement that his hard work and dedication have in fact earned him the distinction of Fulbright Scholar.

An international relations and German major, Salazar was awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant grant to teach English to primary or secondary schoolchildren in Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany, a mountainous region in the southwestern part of the country that borders France, Luxembourg and Belgium.

Salazar is the fourth Roger Williams student in the past decade to receive a Fulbright Scholarship. A highly competitive and prestigious honor, the Fulbright Program awarded only 20 percent of nearly 5,000 applicants an English Teaching Assistant grant this year.

"I've been working hard with a Fulbright Scholarship in mind for the past four years; it's been a lot of motivation to perform exceptionally well academically," says Salazar, who leaves in late August to spend a year in Germany.

"Knowing that I'll be teaching in Germany is very satisfying, and a bit surreal to have my goal actually realized," he adds.

Salazar's introduction to his host country occurred during freshman year with a short-term study-abroad course in Munich, led by Professor of Foreign Languages and Classics Anthony Hollingsworth. There for one week, Salazar stayed in a youth hostel, roamed the city and countryside, and visited historic and cultural sites from museums on ancient Greek art, to the BMW factory, Neuschwanstein Castle and Dachau Concentration Camp.

Although a brief visit, it was on that trip that Salazar cultivated a love for the German language and country, motivating him to add German as a second major to his international relations program, while finding a mentor in Hollingsworth, himself a two-time Fulbright Scholar.

Salazar also studied abroad his junior year in Austria, taking courses on European political systems, world history, European demographics and German. Throughout his years at RWU, he's debated in competitive conferences with the University's International Relations Organization, which comprises the Model United Nations and Model Arab League delegations, and was a member of the men's track and field team.

"The foreign languages department could not be more proud of Anthony. He absolutely deserved to win this award," Hollingsworth says. "He is exactly the sort of student we love to see representing our university around the world after graduation. He embodies everything that the President is looking for in combining professional studies with a liberal arts education."

With his additional academic focus in international relations, Salazar is well-versed in world history, politics and an appreciation of diverse cultures – key components of the sort of diplomacy and cultural exchange the Fulbright Program hopes to extend by sending scholars around the world, according to Professor of International Relations Mark Sawoski, who served as Salazar's academic advisor and RWU's Fulbright Program advisor. This combination of academic skill sets most likely gave Salazar an edge in obtaining his Fulbright Scholarship, in addition to being one of the top students in both programs, Sawoski says.

"In winning this prestigious award, Anthony is a step ahead of most college graduates," Sawoski says. "He has been judged by the Fulbright Program as being one of the best and brightest of his generation."

While in Germany, Salazar plans to enroll in graduate courses on ancient history and languages from German to Latin and Greek, with the goal of one day teaching professionally at a university in the U.S. This opportunity to teach English to German schoolchildren will be a great launching pad toward that career, he says.

"Teaching itself is fun and is a great way to develop language skills and intercultural skills. It's also really encouraging to see the students become inspired – that's the reason I want to teach," he says.

As he prepares to embark on a career as Fulbright Scholar, Salazar encourages students in the following graduating classes to aspire to a Fulbright Scholarship – to "not limit themselves at all and go for what they want."